

Unions prepared to collaborate as USPS announces agreement with DOGE to slash spending

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The United States Postal Service (USPS) has signed an agreement with Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to help slash spending and assist with job cuts, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced in a letter to Congress Thursday. The letter announced a plan to cut 10,000 jobs over the next 30 days, primarily through early retirement.

The move underscores the expansion of the Trump White House's attacks on public services and social programs. Urgent action is required by the working class to halt this, up to and including strike action. The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee must be built as an alternative leadership to the sellout union bureaucrats.

DOGE is the spearhead of a massive looting operation of federal funds, grabbing everything not bolted down to redirect funds to Wall Street and the military. Musk earlier called specifically for the privatization of USPS and "everything we possibly can." USPS' vast operations, encompassing more than 600,000 workers and extensive physical infrastructure, are a potentially lucrative prize for investors, so long as its operating deficit, unfunded pension obligations and other financial issues are dealt with.

That grabbing USPS is on the mind of the financial oligarchy was shown by a recent Wells Fargo report laying out "five required steps" for the post office's privatization, including the repeal of the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act, which established it in its current form, the splitting of mail from the more lucrative parcel business, the selloff of \$85 billion in real estate and price increases of between 30 and 140 percent (this "would be positive for [private competitors] Fedex & UPS," the report notes).

Other countries have already privatized their post offices with disastrous results, such as Royal Mail in Britain and Deutsche Post in Germany.

The move is the next step in Trump's bid to privatize the post office, which his camp pledged to do before it even took office. Last month, it was reported that Trump was considering illegally axing the USPS Board of Governors and shifting USPS to the Commerce Department through an executive order.

In addition to setting the stage for more cuts, the move, which may still take place, raises democratic issues. Trump's personal

control over USPS, currently operated as an independent agency, would give him access to the processing of mail-in ballots and other sensitive mail.

But the privatization of the post office has been a bipartisan goal for decades. The support of both parties for austerity was underscored Friday by the Democrats' caving in the Senate to Trump's government funding extension, which paves the way to hundreds of billions in cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps and other programs.

USPS is already four years into the misnamed "Delivering for America" (DFA) program, aimed at reorganizing it along the lines of Amazon into a highly concentrated, automated system. The plan entails the destruction of tens of thousands of jobs, the elimination of thousands of routes and the closure of local post offices.

In the letter, DeJoy, who is stepping down at the end of the year, bragged that the program has already claimed 30,000 jobs, not counting the 10,000 to be cut in the next month, and the elimination of 20 percent of its headquarters staff in the so-called "Friday Night Massacre."

While generating increased revenues, DFA has been a disaster for the public at large, with mail lost or delayed for weeks in many areas of the country.

Pensions, workers' comp under fire

DeJoy's letter takes aim in particular at pension costs and the USPS Workers Compensation program, indicating that USPS intends to enlist DOGE's help in slashing benefits. DeJoy had earlier harped on similar themes in a recent congressional hearing.

He pointed out in particular that the retirement program is handled through the federal Office of Personnel Management, which has already been effectively taken over by DOGE. OPM was the conduit for the distribution of a DOGE email last month demanding every federal worker justify their continued employment.

In particular, DeJoy complains that the workers' comp program costs USPS \$400 million per year more "when compared to private industry practices." This is especially ominous because the

state-run workers' compensation systems are used to systematically deny care to workers injured on the job. The *World Socialist Web Site* has reported on horror stories such as Amazon workers being made homeless after their claims were denied.

USPS wants the same "efficiency" in kicking its own injured workers to the curb. Given the fact that surveillance programs like TIAREAP [Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process] already enforce dangerous speedup, leading to preventable tragedies such as the death by heatstroke of Dallas letter carrier Eugene Gates, this will lead directly to more injuries and deaths as workers try to push through injuries rather than roll the dice with workers' comp.

DeJoy's letter also singled out for attack regulations and legally mandated service standards which he claimed were "burdensome" and "anachronistic," denouncing in particular the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) as an "unnecessary agency." In a series of highly critical reports on the implementation of DFA, the PRC has cited USPS's degradation of service for rural customers, violating its mandate to provide equal service to all Americans. This requirement in particular appears to be a major target.

Union bureaucracy offers its services

In response to DeJoy's letter, the postal unions issued separate statements making clear they are prepared to give everything USPS administrators and DOGE want. They singled out for criticism the possibility of Musk's access to private data through USPS, a serious issue, but one they raised to the exclusion of all others.

Even on this point, the union bureaucrats have threatened only to take legal action, without even raising the possibility of a strike, the only way this and other attacks can be stopped. In 1970, postal workers carried out a wildcat strike against measures by president Nixon which pale in comparison to what is being considered now.

The unions continue to insist that workers obey sweeping, undemocratic laws banning them from striking even as Trump deliberately violates the law and the Constitution and is working to set up a dictatorship. Appeals to the courts are a dead end, as they know full well, because the Supreme Court is in the hands of Trump's collaborators.

Statements by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), which covers city carriers, and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association explicitly declared that they are prepared to help USPS find areas to cut costs. "These policy changes are needed to improve the Postal Service's financial viability, and we welcome anyone's help who can influence Congress and the Administration to finally enact them," NALC wrote.

Such a statement amounts to a declaration that they are prepared to work with an emerging dictatorship to attack their own membership.

They even suggest in particular that USPS retirement funds be reinvested away from Treasury bonds into the stock market—which is down more than 4,000 points off of recent highs due to Trump's

trade war measures.

This shows that a fight has to be coordinated by new leadership drawn from the rank-and-file, combining opposition to Trump with a struggle to transfer power out of the bureaucracy's hands. Last month, the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee held a meeting with 150 postal workers and their allies which passed a key resolution, which declared:

- The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees condemns the mass purge of federal workers by the Trump administration and Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and calls for the mass mobilization of federal employees, including mass meetings, demonstrations and collective strike action, to stop it. Hundreds of thousands of workers across federal agencies face immediate termination, in flagrant violation of contracts and civil service protections. The destruction of federal jobs is part of a broader corporate drive to gut public services and strip workers of all protections, including the assault on postal workers and the plans for privatization of the postal service.

- This attack goes beyond Reagan's 1981 PATCO firings, which destroyed 11,000 jobs and marked the beginning of decades of union-busting. Now, the scale is even greater. Any federal agencies that provide social services or regulate corporations are being hollowed out or destroyed. The USPS, already targeted for privatization, is next. If these firings proceed, it will mean the elimination of social programs and mass job losses across the public sector. This will encourage state and local officials and private employers to escalate their attack on jobs and rights of workers.

- This meeting condemns the cowardice and complicity of the trade union bureaucracy, which has proposed no action to oppose this historic assault on the working class. The AFL-CIO has limited itself to appeals to the media and the Democrats. AFGE merely promises to challenge "unlawful terminations." This is not simply a legal issue—it is a political war on the working class. If the union leadership will not fight this, they will fight nothing.

- The time for empty statements is over. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees and Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee call for immediate preparations for mass resistance, up to and including strike action. Postal workers must join with federal workers, logistics workers, and all workers to stop this purge. We reject the dismantling of public services and demand workers' control over critical sectors like the USPS. The only way forward is through the independent organization of the working class, in opposition to both corporate-backed parties and their enforcers in the trade union apparatus.



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